

51/2002/006

MR D GILLARD

**ERECTION OF AN AGRICULTURAL STORAGE BUILDING AT SAMWAYS FARM,
BURROWBRIDGE.**

35520/30750

FULL PERMISSION

PROPOSAL

In April 2002 an application for the erection of an agricultural storage building at Samways Farm was refused on the grounds of lack of justification, detrimental impact on the setting of the adjacent Grade II Listed Baptist Church and visual intrusion within a Special Landscape Area. The current scheme is an attempt to address the shortcomings of the earlier refusal. The proposal is to erect a building for the storage of agricultural produce, predominantly cereals, as well as fertilizers, seeds and agricultural machinery. The building measures 27.4 m x 15.2 m and has a ridge height of 9.2 m. The walls are to be constructed of concrete panels and steel sheeting and the roof is to be corrugated grey sheeting. It is also proposed to provide tree planting on the western boundary of the site to reduce the impact on the setting of the Listed Building. The application is accompanied by a supporting statement.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY whilst I have no objection to the principle of this development, I am concerned that the visibility is restricted at the access to the site. I would recommend conditions be applied to improve the access arrangements.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY no objection in principle subject to conditions and advisory notes concerning: facilities for the storage of oils, fuels or chemicals; the storage of fertilizers, chemicals or pesticides; and the need to avoid contaminated water entering and polluting surface or groundwater.

CONSERVATION OFFICER whilst still fairly near to the Listed Baptist Chapel, the revised siting is better related to the existing farm buildings. LANDSCAPE OFFICER the proposed building should have no impact on the site and views in to the site because of the existing mass of buildings. Planting up of the corners of the site by the bridle way would help soften the impact of the buildings. Existing hedgerows are vital to screen the site and should be maintained.

PARISH COUNCIL object most strongly, there are alternative facilities being advertised to let in the village, Riverside is too narrow for more heavy traffic, the exit from Samways is hidden from motorists from the Westonzoyland direction and drivers leaving cannot see what is coming.

9 LETTERS OF OBJECTION have been received on the following grounds:-
Burrowbridge cannot take anymore concrete buildings that are not necessary; the road

to Samways is already congested the proposal will further increase traffic where the exit to the main road is terrible; the houses along the river bank are overshadowed by the barn recently put up and as an area of natural beauty it would be tragic to pass this application; too many planning blunders have been made in Burrowbridge already; the proposal should not be considered until an acceptable scaled elevational drawing has been submitted showing the proposal in relation to the existing buildings; there is a ditch on one side of Burrow Drove which fills with water in winter and floods an area in front of Samways Farm. Drainage is not adequate to carry away the surface water; Samways Farm is currently used to store non-agricultural items; increased noise due to more traffic; the right to natural light has already been taken away; necessary steps should be taken to clear the site of the rubble, road signs and concrete beams on transporters. Outside storage is not permitted at this site; In the East Deane Local Plan, Burrowbridge is part of the Somerset Levels and the Moors Special Landscape Area. The A361 is regarded (correctly) as "inadequate" both in terms of the road and its junctions, which includes Riverside. Riverside is a single-track road and unsuitable for a large agricultural storage facility and its attendant additional traffic. Residential development is specifically limited in Burrowbridge because of the inadequacy of the roads, and it must equally follow that a storage use generating HGV traffic is even more inappropriate; The "Mump" is regarded as "an outstanding landscape and archaeological feature", and "its historical association with King Alfred and the commanding views it affords is an attraction for visitors and tourists". The application site is visible from the Mump and a commercial storage facility is inappropriate; No attempts were made to impose a landscaping condition in the context of a policy which requires ".... positive measures of enhancement", leaving residents and visitors to look at a large commercial shed. (I am referring to the large shed permitted last year.) ; The Revised Deposit Plan is a material consideration for the purposes of this application. "Burrowbridge adjoins the rivers Parrett and Tone, and is set in the flat expanse of the Somerset Levels. This area is extremely attractive and rich in archaeology and wildlife. Burrow Mump is a designated special landscape feature and ancient monument and there are a number of listed buildings in the village"; From the Environmental Protection Objectives, I draw particular attention to the need to protect and improve the landscape quality and character of the countryside, to protect and improve the quality and character of settlements, to preserve and enhance the historical geological and cultural heritage, and to ensure the use of good design and materials which respect and enhance the local character and distinctiveness; Development proposals "will be required to meet" the relevant criteria. These include that additional road traffic should not lead to an overloading of cross roads, road safety problems or environmental degradation by fumes, noise vibrations or visual impact. Riverside is a single-track lane wholly unsuitable for HGV traffic and has no footpath (nor is there room for one). There is a material and unacceptable conflict with pedestrians. No additional traffic should be tolerated. Even if it could be made to comply with the relevant sight lines this could only be done at the expense of the removal of hedgerows, which would be inconsistent with the rural character of Riverside with hedgerows along its entire length; Additional degradation by virtue of noise is wholly unjustified and unacceptable; Visual impact is wholly unacceptable both to the adjoining residential accommodation and the wider landscape. This large utilitarian warehouse materially 'harms' the landscape and character of the area. It's scale, height and massing are wholly inappropriate in such close proximity to existing residential accommodation including the listed building. There is a row of 4 houses immediately to the east of the site and sharing the same access; To the west of the site is the former Burrowbridge Baptist Church which is a Grade II

Listed building and in residential occupation. It damages the setting of the listed building. The houses to the west of School Lane immediately abut Riverside. The distance between Riverside and the front door of these houses is of the order of 15 feet. The HGVs currently running from the transport depot are massive articulated lorries. As far as I am aware the current depot has no hours of operation or days of operation limitations; the proposed building has been placed behind and beyond the existing building line and introduces built development into the open countryside. It will be visible from the rear gardens of many properties including my own. It does not reinforce local character and distinctiveness of the area including the landscape setting of the site. Burrow Mump is a scheduled ancient monument and the proposal will adversely affect the setting of a nationally important monument. This is not a matter which can be overcome by a condition; The transport depot currently run by the applicant company is a dreadful eyesore sitting virtually at the foot of the ancient monument; This development does not protect the country for its own sake and is in direct conflict with the environmental protection objectives protecting and improving landscape quality and neither does it improve or protect the quality and character of the village; The site is already fully developed; No special need for additional storage accommodation has been advanced, and the policy framework identified above necessitates such a case being made out. The Applicants do not advance a need case; 16,000 square feet of storage space is being advertised by the applicant on the Stathe Road; I also wish to raise an additional change of circumstances since the previous application, namely, the construction of the residential accommodation directly opposite the entrance to the application site; There is much missing information from the application, which together with the appraisal, is in my view seriously flawed; the proposal is out of proportion with the existing landscape as is the shed built last year; storage at Samways is more than adequate and empty warehousing is available near to the site meaning further building is unnecessary; development of this scale is not in keeping with Burrowbridge's designation as an 'Environmentally Sensitive Area'; the proposal is close to existing dwellings, although it does not state the distance on the plans; the increased number of vehicles will contribute to vibrations of my house which may affect the structure; the road has already subsided and heavier vehicles will make the bank weaker; the proposal is detrimental to highway safety; concerns regarding the storage of toxic and flammable fertilizers close to residential properties; if used to store grain dryers may be installed which will cause noise pollution; the proposal could jeopardise the sale of my property; Samways is becoming a small industrial site; certain times of the year the road is not passable due to flooding; the building is large and going to be an eyesore; it is our understanding that it is the amount of land owned not rented that classifies the need for storage capacity; the lane is in a poor state of repair and increased vehicle usage will make the condition of the lane deteriorate even more; we cannot see the need for another building as one or more of the existing buildings are used for storing school books and furniture, which are not agricultural; the proposal is worse than the last application as it is closer to residential properties, one of which is listed; the site looks like a bomb site with no consideration given to anyone nearby. There is mud on the road, noise, old trailers with scaffolding and piles of earth on the site.

POLICY CONTEXT

Policy STR6 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review states that development outside towns, rural centres and villages should be strictly controlled and restricted to that which benefits economic activity, maintains or enhances the environment and does not foster growth in the need to travel. The proposed development will assist an existing farming business in the open countryside. Policy S8 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit states that outside defined settlement limits, new building will not be permitted unless it maintains or enhances the environmental quality and landscape of the area and meets a number of criteria including that it is for the purpose of agriculture. Policy 9 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review and Policy EN17 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit require that new developments do not harm the visual setting of any listed buildings. Policy ED/EC/7 of the East Deane Local Plan states that proposals should not harm the visual amenity of Special Landscape Areas.

ASSESSMENT

Sufficient information has been submitted to determine the application. The allegations with regard to the usage of the site and other alleged contraventions are currently under investigation by the Enforcement Officer. The previous application for a storage building on the site was refused on the grounds of lack of justification, the impact on the setting of the adjacent Listed Building and visual intrusion within a Special Landscape Area. These matters are regarded to be the principal considerations in determining the current application. Each of these will be dealt with in turn.

With regard to justification the applicant submitted a supporting statement in relation to the storage building. A second opinion from ADAS was sought on this justification. ADAS comment that having interviewed the applicant and conducted a site visit, the information provided in the agricultural appraisal would appear to be correct and "The functional need for additional storage on the holding can be warranted. Based on existing facilities the provision of an additional building would provide optimum benefit". The conclusion of the report states that there are no concerns as to the design or appearance of the proposal. In light of these comments there would appear to be sufficient justification for the proposal.

With regard to the impact on the Listed Baptist Church the new scheme proposes a different siting to that previously refused. The Conservation Officer no longer raises concerns regarding the impact of the proposal on the setting of the Listed Building. Tree planting along the western boundary of the site is also proposed to reduce the impact of the building.

The siting currently proposed is considered to be far more appropriate than that previously refused. The current proposal is well related to the existing farm buildings and does not significantly encroach onto the open land at the rear of the site. It is not considered that the proposal has a significantly detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the Special Landscape Area to warrant refusal.

The site is served by an existing access over which the Planning Authority has no control with regard to its frequency of use or type of vehicle permitted to use the access.

Although the existing access is far from ideal the suggestions of the Highway Authority would result in an unreasonable loss of hedgerows, which characterize the area. According to the agent the current proposal will not significantly increase the level of traffic to and from the site. For these reasons the continued use of the existing access is considered to be acceptable.

Many of the other objections received are matters outside of planning control.

In light of the above the proposal is considered to be acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION

Permission be GRANTED subject to conditions of materials, landscaping, existing hedgerows to be retained, facilities for storage of oils. Notes re oil storage facility, storage of fertilizers and prevention of contaminated water entering surface or groundwater.

In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

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NOTES: